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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a media study project in the elementary and secondary schools of Iowa. The project developed a media study for secondary students and a college companion (or adopter) course to prepare teachers in this new curriculum. The project employed behavioral science techniques and individualized instruction for both courses. The objectives of the student course included eight modules devoted to study in the production, aesthetics, interpretation, hardware, genres, evaluation, presentation, and language of the various media. The adopter course, a self-instructional course teaching media with media, was intended to facilitate the adoption of the student course; the course includes study of film, radio, and television. The paper also discusses methods for evaluating student performance, including standardized tests, original instrument design, and measurements of attitudes toward the various media. (Author/DI)

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PROJECT MEDIA NOW--A BOLD LOOK AT NEW CURRICULA

With the tremendous increase in radio-TV-film courses being offered in the elementary and secondary schools it is vital that someone confront the need for curricula in this area of education. Not just a piecemeal and cursory look at a beginning film study/production unit but a completely mediated approach using the media to teach the media. That is exactly what has taken place in Iowa under a media study program being developed called "Project Media Now".

The results of a recent survey of Iowa high schools established the need. With 320 of Iowa's 456 high schools answering the questionnaire, slightly more than 100 indicated they had at least one course involving media study. (Basic knowledge is here defined as a background in the areas of production, history, criticism, and aesthetics of radio-TV-film.) Some teachers had experience in one area or another but none had background oriented toward elementary and secondary media education. One-hundred schools indicated that they were in need of teachers with backgrounds in the media (radio-TV-film). One-hundred eight stated that they would like to have a student teacher in media (a teacher so trained in basic media knowledge).

This situation is presently undergoing a change and through the development of such courses as the one here described the gap between the need for qualified media teachers and the number of available media teachers will be narrowed.

Over two years ago, the Learning Resources Center at Red Oak, Iowa, under the direction of William Horner and Ron Curtis, began

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developing, testing, validating and disseminating a course of instruction in media study with the help of the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction and a U.S. Government Title III, Elementary and Secondary Education Act grant. This course is aimed at two levels.

The project includes the development of a new course of study for secondary students in the area of media study, and a companion course (adopter course) designed to prepare classroom teachers to teach in this new curriculum mode. The project also includes the design and development of a research model, including new instrumentation. Another aspect of the project is the development of media study courses in schools in Southwest Iowa. Because the curriculum development employs the techniques of behavioral science and individualized instruction, it is unique among media curriculum development in the United States. Curriculum development for the project includes original production of "learning activity packages" that are used by the students in learning situations. Individualized learning materials in "learning activity packages" have also been developed for the adopter course.

STUDENT COURSE

The experimental site for the development of the student course is Mount Ayr, Iowa (Mount Ayr Community School District). The principal cooperating agencies for the project are the Southwest Iowa Learning Resources Center and project area schools. Classes began in August, 1970. Mr. William Hohlfeld, Project Instructor, worked closely from that point on with Mr. Ron Curtis, Program Director, and the Southwest Iowa Learning Resources Center staff,

in developing learning activity packages and devising the format for the student course. The major objectives of the course are as follows:

1. Production of Media Messages

   Upon completion of "Media Now" the student will have--

   A. Knowledge of and demonstrated ability to use a representative sample of production and presentation equipment.

   B. Knowledge of and skill in using basic production techniques.

   C. Knowledge of production vocabulary.

2. Media Interpretation

   Upon completion of "Media Now" the student will be able to--

   D. Analyze and evaluate the appropriateness and success of media/message pairings.

   E. Evaluate media messages according to "good media criteria".

   F. Use a more sophisticated vocabulary in response to media.

   G. Demonstrate increased sophistication in consuming persuasive media messages.

   Near completion of "Media Now" the student will--

   H. Voluntarily consume more diverse, sophisticated, and greater numbers of media messages.

3. Attitudes

   His attitudes will improve toward:

   I. Self

   J. Teacher

   K. Media Study

L. School

M. Media - Movies

N. Media - Newspapers

O. Truth in Media

P. Aesthetics

The course is made up of eight modules to be offered for an eighteen-week period (one semester). Each module includes a number of learning activity packages of an individualized nature. The modules include study in:

Media Production	Hardware	Media Presentation
Media Aesthetics	Media Genre	Media Language
Message Interpretation	Media Evaluation	

Adopter Course

The adopter course design is similar in format to the student course and was developed jointly by the Southwest Iowa Learning Resources Center and Professor Dann Perkins of Iowa State University at Ames, Iowa. Adopter course modules include information to facilitate the adoption of the student course. It is a self-instructional course that teaches media with media. If radio, TV, and film are the effective communicators media educators claim they are, it follows that using each medium as the basis of study for that medium may be the most efficient method of education. For example, to study film production it is vital to use films to teach the various concepts being examined. More specifically, to teach the relationship of f-stops to depth-of-field it is necessary to produce a film which will clearly state 1) the concept being taught, 2) the behavioral objectives to be mastered, and

3) the information by which the student can test himself. Similar aids are produced in the areas of radio and television. For the television production sequence, for example, nine video tapes of varying lengths are developed to teach lighting, camera movement, switching, etc. For radio, audio tapes are used.

The completed adopter course is now a reality, a self-contained package covering basic information on all aspects of the three media concerned. The course is non-linear in format so students can work in any order and at their own pace. Time limits are suggested for the maximum amount of time students should spend on specific parts of the course. After testing during the spring and fall of 1972, the course package will be ready for dissemination. We believe it will provide Iowa's growing number of elementary and secondary media teachers with information specifically directed toward their needs and with background knowledge they presently lack.

As mentioned earlier, the adopter course is only half of the project with a parallel being developed specifically for elementary and secondary students. That is, after a college student has been through the upper level course(s) he can readily go into a teaching position and become the "adopter" of a ready-made course developed for students on the elementary and secondary level. The college level course dovetails with the lower level course to provide the elementary/secondary teacher with a reliable package of instruction with which (s)he is thoroughly acquainted.

The adopter course is now being formally offered at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. A number of other colleges and universities have shown interest in its possibilities.

EVALUATION

The evaluation design has been prepared in cooperation with Dr. Howard Levie and Roger Gaither of Indiana University and Dr. Raymond Manion of the Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory of Kansas City. The evaluation instrumentation involves both standardized tests and original instrument design. The following media measurement instruments have been used for measuring student performance goals:

1. Self Concept Attitude Scale
2. Teacher Attitude Scale
3. Attitude Toward Media Study
4. School Sentiment Scale
5. Attitude Toward the Movies
6. Attitude Toward the Newspapers
7. Attitude Toward Censorship
8. Attitude Toward the Aesthetic Value
9. Stanford Achievement Test - Arts and Humanities Section
10. Meier Art Judgment Test

All of the instrumentation is based on specific behavioral objectives that have been constructed for both the course and the individual modules.

A specially constructed media lab is being used for the production work of the experimental group at Mount Ayr. The lab includes materials and equipment to facilitate both the production and consumption of media messages to meet the course objectives. It has been possible to share the facilities of this media lab with participating project area schools. A documentary 16mm film of the project's activities has been produced and screened throughout

the country. Educators throughout the United States have responded favorably thus far to the efforts of the project.

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